uncared for, and marriage, ostensibly forbidden, has taken place only when celebrated with no public festivities. Mourning clothing has been worn. Formerly, as a sign of loyalty and grief the widow might hang or drown herself, and this act, possibly carried out with some ceremony and graced by the presence of a magistrate, might be recognized by the Emperor with an honorary tablet or *p'ai lou* (arch). Some of the Ch'ing rulers attempted to discourage the practice, but they were by no means completely successful.

Prominent in the cult of the dead has been the *shen chu,* called by foreigners the ancestral tablet. In the home of the eldest son and, usually, of the other sons has been customarily a tablet to a deceased father, and on it as well the name of the mother and, perhaps, of the sons. There may also be tablets to other near relatives and to the founder and principal member of the clan. For these there may be a special niche or, if the family can afford it, a room or even a building in the home. Sometimes they are in the main reception room. Before these tablets incense may be burned daily and offerings of food placed on stated occasions. Important family events, such as betrothals, are announced to them, and before them, at a marriage, the wedding couple make their *kotow.* Prayer may be offered them for help in emergencies and lots be cast before them.

Many clans had and have ancestral temples. These, as we have seen, had their prototypes in the religious practices of very early historic times. Many of them are sumptuous. They are managed by the elders or a group elected by the various branches of the clan, and they and the ceremonies in them have usually been maintained by endowments. These endowments

may be used not only for the upkeep of the temple but for the support of the aged, the poor, and the widows of the clan and for other family purposes. In the temple may be several halls separated by courts and the whole surrounded by a high wall. In one of the halls are tablets to the deceased male members of the clan. These are arranged on steps, those of the same generation on the same step, the oldest being on the highest with that to the founder of the clan in its center. A poorer member of the clan may be in constant attendance and keep incense continuously burning and light candles before the tablets twice a month. Once a year, at the time of the